

Claims

1. A method for doing business including
- generating a supply chain communication event at a sender for delivery to a set of recipients, said set of recipients including trading partners in a supply chain;
- processing said event at a central hub, said processing including modifying said event to be uniquely identifiable;
- delivering said event in its modified form to said set of recipients;
- and
- querying said central hub responsive to receipt of said event.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said processing includes
- sending said event to said hub, said hub including a database for storing a plurality of unique identifiers associated with a plurality of said events and sets of data descriptive of said events;
- appending a unique identifier to said event at said hub;
- storing a set of data at said hub, said data descriptive of said event and indexed to said unique identifier; and
- delivering said event to a set of recipients.

1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein said hub is located at a location logi-
2 cally remote to said generating;

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4 4. The method of claim 2, wherein said appending includes recording
5 the step of said appending in said database.

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7 5. The method of claim 2, wherein said storing includes saving a set of
8 said data descriptive of said event in said database further including additional data sup-
9 plied by said sender.

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11 6. The method of claim 2, wherein said delivering includes sending said
12 event in its modified form to said set of recipients.

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14 7. The method of claim 1, wherein said querying includes
15 sending a query to said hub from at least one of said set of recipients,
16 said query requesting additional information responsive to receipt of at least one said
17 event.

18 generating a response to said query; and

19 delivering said response to at least one of said set of recipients.

1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein said sending is (1) performed manu-
2 ally at the request of one of said set of recipients, or (2) performed automatically respon-
3 sive to receipt of a said event.

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5 9. The method of claim 7, wherein said sending includes identifying a
6 said event for which additional information is requested, said identifying including
7 matching a unique identifier associated with said event with a record of said unique iden-
8 tifier in a database at said hub.

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10 10. The method of claim 7, wherein said generating includes creating an
11 electronic message of additional information from said database associated with said
12 event identified by said unique identifier.

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14 11. An apparatus including
15 means for generating a supply chain communication event at a
16 sender for delivery to a set of recipients, said set of recipients including trading partners
17 in a supply chain;
18 means for processing said event at a central hub, said means for
19 processing including means for modifying said event to be uniquely identifiable
20 means for delivering said event in its modified form to said set of re-
21 cipients; and

1 means for querying said central hub responsive to receipt of said
2 event.

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4 12. The method of claim 11, wherein said means for processing includes
5 means for sending said event to said hub, said hub including a data-
6 base for storing a plurality of unique identifiers associated with a plurality of said events
7 and sets of data descriptive of said events;

8 means for appending a unique identifier to said event at said hub;
9 means for storing a set of data at said hub, said data descriptive of
10 said event and indexed to said identifier; and

11 means for delivering said event to a set of recipients
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13 13. The method of claim 12, wherein said hub is located at a location
14 logically remote to said generating;
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16 14. The method of claim 12, wherein said means for appending includes
17 means for recording the step of said appending in said database.
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19 15. The method of claim 12, wherein said means for storing includes
20 means for saving a set of said data descriptive of said event in said database further in-
21 cluding additional data supplied by the sender.
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1 16. The method of claim 12, wherein said means for delivering includes
2 means for sending said event in its modified form to said set of recipients.

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4 17. The method of claim 11, wherein said means for querying includes
5 means for sending a query to said hub from at least one of said set of
6 recipients, said query requesting additional information responsive to receipt of at least
7 one said event.

8 means for generating a response to said query; and
9 means for delivering said response to at least one of said set of recipi-
10 ents.

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12 18. The method of claim 17, wherein said means for sending said query is
13 (1) performed manually at the request of a recipient, or (2) performed automatically re-
14 sponsive to receipt of a said event.

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16 19. The method of claim 17, wherein said means for sending includes
17 means for identifying a said event for which additional information is requested, said
18 means for identifying including means for matching a unique identifier associated with
19 said event with a record of said unique identifier in a database at said hub.

1 20. The method of claim 17, wherein said means for generating includes
2 means for creating an electronic message of additional information from said database
3 associated with said event indicated by said unique identifier.
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5 21. Computer readable media including written thereon instructions read-
6 able by a computer to perform the steps of

7 generating a supply chain communication event for delivery to a set
8 of recipients, said set of recipients including trading partners in a supply chain;

9 receiving said event at a central hub;

10 modifying said event to include a unique identifier, said identifier
11 stored with additional information descriptive of said event in a database at said hub;

12 delivering said event in its modified form to said set of recipients;

13 querying said event for said information descriptive of said event,
14 said querying including matching said unique identifier included in said event with said
15 identifier stored in said database; and

16 responding to said querying, said responding including delivery of
17 information descriptive of said event.
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